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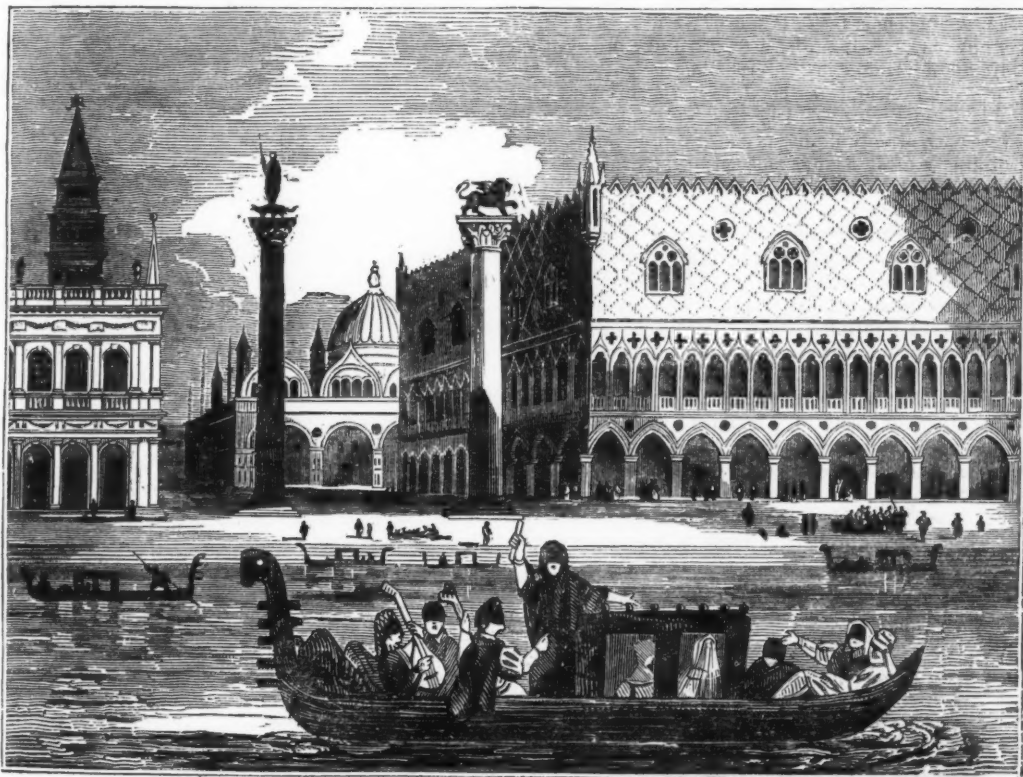
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UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION
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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF VENICE. I.



PIAZZETTA, AND DUCAL PALACE, VENICE, FROM THE HARBOUR.

THERE is a glorious city in the sea;
The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed
Clings to the marble of her palaces.
No track of men, no footsteps to and fro,
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the sea
Invisible: and from the land we went
As to a floating city—steering in,
And gliding up her streets as in a dream,
So smoothly, silently,—by many a dome,
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,
The statues ranged along an azure sky—
By many a pile in more than eastern splendour,
Of old the residence of merchant kings.”—ROGERS.

THE interest which attaches to the City of Venice is altogether of a peculiar kind. The singularity of its position and architecture would alone invest it with powerful attractions; it presents to the eye of the traveller an appearance so very unlike that of any other city which he can have seen, as at once to produce upon his mind an impression most strange and striking. But this is not all; the associations which history and romance have linked with the scene, are quite as wonderful as the scene itself. During her thirteen hundred years of independence, Venice was continually the theatre of events of the most stirring description; for, during the greater portion of that period, the republic of which she was the seat, played a most conspicuous part on the stage of the civilized world. The interest springing from these sources, is heightened by the charm which is derived from “the magical illusions of poetry;” the genius of Shakspeare and Otway has im-

VOL. VIII.

mortalized this Queen of the Adriatic, and has given to her, for us, a spell “beyond her name in story.” Nor is there wanting to the full effect of the scene, that moral interest which is always felt in contemplating the picture of an old city which has outlived its greatness; in all the palaces and public buildings of Venice, the reflecting traveller may read “sermons in stones,” and in gazing upon the melancholy combination which they present of former splendour and actual decay, he cannot fail to feel that he is “reading a history.”

It has often been remarked, that of all the cities of Italy, Venice is perhaps the only one which derives no portion of its interest from classical associations; and yet, as has been observed with equal truth, it has an antiquity of its own, scarcely less venerable than that which invests with ideal grandeur the memorials of the Roman empire. When the Republic fell, it was the most ancient state in Europe; and during the long course of its existence it had seen, and mingled in, some of the mightiest political revolutions which have ever happened on the face of the earth. Venice, to use the words of Sismondi, “witnessed the long agony and the termination of the Roman empire; in the west, the birth of the French power, when Clovis conquered Gaul; the rise and fall of the Ostrogoths in Italy; of the Visigoths in Spain; of the Lombards, who succeeded to the first; of the Saracens, who dispossessed the second. Venice saw the empire of the Khalifs rise, threaten to invade the world, divide and decay. Long the ally of the Byzantine emperors, she by turns succoured and oppressed them; she carried off trophies from their capital

she shared their provinces, and joined to her titles that of the mistress of a fourth and a half of the Roman empire. She saw the Eastern empire fall, and the ferocious Mussulmans rise on its ruins. She saw the French monarchy give way; and alone, immoveable, this proud Republic contemplated the kingdoms and the nations which passed before her. But after all the rest, she sank in her turn, and the state which linked the present to the past, and joined the two epochs of the civilization of the universe, has ceased to exist."

THE LAGOON.

THAT part of the Mediterranean which washes the eastern coast of Italy, is called the Adriatic Sea, or Gulf. Its upper, or northern portion, receives all the waters which flow from the southern declivities of the Alps. These streams are numerous; they discharge themselves in close succession along a line which equals thirty leagues in length, and which comprises the north-western corner of the Adriatic, and nearly the whole of its northern coast. The southernmost river is the Po, which comes charged with waters from both the Alps and the Apennines; the northernmost, or rather the most easterly, is the Lisonzo, which has its origin in the mountains of Carniola. The most considerable of the many streams which the Gulf receives between these extreme points, are the Adige, the Brenta, the Musone, the Piave, the Livenza, the Lemene, and the Tagliamento. Every one of these rivers has a rapid course, and brings down, especially in the rainy season, enormous quantities of mud and sand, which, as soon as they reach the sea, and are released from the violence of the stream, are quietly deposited. The head of the Adriatic has thus become a bed of soft mud, extending between twenty and thirty miles from the shore, and covered with water, not exceeding, for the most part, one or two feet in depth. This immense expanse, which cannot justly be considered as either sea or land, is called the *Laguna*, or, as we say, the Lagoon; it is navigable throughout only by skiffs, drawing a few inches of water; but wherever the rivers have cut a few channels for their passage, or artificial canals have been excavated, ships of considerable burden may ride securely. The Lagoon is not open to the sea; its outer edge is embanked by a succession of long, narrow, sandy islands, or slips of land, which serve as so many natural breakwaters, and form, in fact, an impregnable rampart against the waves of the Adriatic. The entrances through this outer barrier are few, and the subsequent navigation through the calm still waters of the Lagoon most intricate and difficult; so that much skill, and a long acquaintance with the windings of the deeper channels, are necessary for a safe pilotage through the labyrinth which they present.

The face of the Lagoon, which we have just described, is sprinkled with a number of small islands, whose soil is of a firmer character than that of the shoals and mud-banks above which they are elevated; some are clustered together, with only narrow channels between them, and others are scattered remotely, "as so many outposts." It is upon a group which lies at the point where the western and the northern coasts of the Adriatic meet, that the city of Venice stands.

Our readers will thus see, that the Venetian Lagoon is, in point of fact, what Mr. Rose calls it, a great mud estuary. That gentleman likens it, in its relation to the Adriatic, to a side-closet, shut off from a room by a partition, but communicating with it by doors. The embankment, or bulwark, which protects the Lagoon from the inroads of the waves, is the partition, the openings in it are the doors, and in a line with them, though not uniformly straight, are the passages, or channels, which bring ships to Venice. These openings, of course, break up the embankment, or partition, into certain compartments, which comprise (beginning from the north) a long spit of land on the side of the territory of Treviso, divided from the continent by backwaters, estuaries, and canals,—the island of St. Erasmus,—that styled the Lido (literally "the beach,") or the Lido di Palestrina,—and, lastly, the artificial barrier, known by the name of the Murazzi, which are massive walls built on shoals, running from near the Lido to the port of Chioggia, not far above the mouth of the Adige. The Murazzi are, properly speaking, of modern creation; but previously to their construction, out-works existed of a similar, though less permanent description.

With the old government of Venice, it was an object of particular care to keep these artificial barriers in a perfect

state; but from the testimony of modern travellers we infer, that the same anxiety has not been evinced by the guardians of the city since it has been under the Austrian rule. Mr. Rose tells us that some time ago a rent was made in the Murazzi which might have been repaired for a trifling sum of money if it had been attended to in time; but there were representations to be made to Vienna, and resolutions and counter-resolutions to be adopted. In the mean time the breach was increasing; and a heavy sea and high tide having laid the Place of St. Mark under water, it was at last held advisable to stop the leak. "I need scarcely add," says our authority, "that this operation now cost ten times the sum which would have sufficed in the beginning."

THE ORIGIN OF VENICE.

IN ancient geography the name Venetia was applied to a large district which lay to the north of the Adriatic, and which constituted, according to the division of Augustus, the tenth division of the Roman empire. Before the irruption of the Barbarians into Italy, fifty cities are said to have flourished in peace and prosperity within the limits of this province; the chief among them were Padua, important for its wealth and its ancient renown,—and Aquileia, which was once the great bulwark of Italy on its north-eastern frontier, and in the time of the geographer Strabo, the great emporium of the Illyrian trade. Their tranquillity was disturbed by Alaric and his Goths in the year 452; and according to the common supposition, a number of refugees from the conquered province, sought shelter in the small islands of the Venetian Gulf. Fifty years afterwards, the inroads of Attila and the Huns gave rise to a second and more extensive emigration; the citizens of Aquileia then betook themselves to the isle of *Grado*, (or as we now call it *Grado*), near the mouth of the Lisonzo, while those of Padua retreated to the *Rivus Altus**, on which the city of Venice subsequently arose. Thus, as the poet says,

..... A few in fear
Flying away from him, whose boast it was
That the grass grew not where his horse had trod,
Gave birth to Venice,—

and the savage conqueror, who so well displayed his ferocious pride in that memorable saying, was undesignedly the instrument of founding a republic which revived in the feudal state of Europe, the art and spirit of commercial industry.

The condition of the islanders about seventy years afterwards, is described in a letter addressed to their "maritime tribunes" by Cassiodorus the minister, or Prætorian præfect, of Theodoric, the Gothic king of Italy. The writer quaintly compares them to water-fowl, who had fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves,—an image which is repeated by a poet of our own, when he says that,—

..... Like the water-fowl
They built their nests among the ocean-waves.

The Præfect allows that the province of Venetia had formerly contained many noble families; but he insinuates that they were now reduced by misfortune to the same level of humble poverty. Fish was the common food of all; and their only treasure was the salt which they extracted from the sea, and exchanged in the neighbouring markets of the continent. Want, however, had begotten enterprise; the exiles had already become familiar with the dangers of the sea, and their vessels, continually increasing in size and number, visited all the harbours of the Adriatic. The extent of their maritime means may be generally inferred from the request which the epistle of Cassiodorus conveys; he exhorts the tribunes in a mild tone of authority to animate the zeal of their countrymen for the public service, which required their assistance to transport the magazines of wine and oil from the province of Istria to the royal city of Ravenna.

ITS RISE AND GREATNESS.

THE tribunes to whom the letter of Cassiodorus was addressed, are supposed to have been twelve officers annually elected in the twelve principal islands; they were

* The literal meaning of these Latin words is "deep stream;" their Italian form is *Rivo Alto*, which has been abbreviated into *Rialto*, a name almost as celebrated as that of Venice itself. As we apply it indiscriminately to three different objects, its various significations may be here explained. It is, in the first place, the name of the island just mentioned, the *Iola di Rialto*; secondly, of the bridge styled *Il Ponte di Rialto*, which connects that island with a neighbouring one; and lastly, of the Exchange, the *Rialto* of Shakspeare, which stands upon the same island.

superseded in 697 by a chief called a Duke, or Doge, who was chosen by the general assembly of the people, for life, and endowed with almost unlimited patronage and prerogatives. Under this form of government, which has been styled a loose mixture of monarchy and democracy, the Venetians suffered much from domestic troubles; the authority of the Doge was respected so long as he was popular and successful, but the caprices of a fickle multitude always exposed him to the chances of a violent death. "It is a remarkable fact," says Mr. Roscoe, "that out of the first fifty doges of Venice, five abdicated, five were banished with their eyes put out, five were massacred and nine deposed;" the Turkish Sultans themselves have scarcely experienced a worse fate. In 1172 a great council was established, which gradually engrossed the management of affairs; little more than a century afterwards this body was made hereditary, and Venice then became subject to a close aristocracy. A conspiracy in 1310, to restore the ancient form of government, gave rise to the appointment of a temporary tribunal, from which sprung the permanent institution of the "Council of Ten," a severe and despotic oligarchy. To this was afterwards added the terrible Inquisition of State, which watched over the chief interests of the Republic, and exercised absolute dominion over the lives and fortunes of its citizens. "Of all forms of government," says a modern traveller (Simond), "that of Venice seems to have been the very worst; yet it was lasting; it was glorious; the people were happy, and a multitude of great men flourished under it during twelve centuries."

In the earlier periods of their history, the Venetians had to struggle with many difficulties. Their infant commerce was grievously oppressed by the pirates which everywhere infested the coast of the Adriatic; and even in the shelter of their Lagoon, the frugal merchants were not free from the inroads of those lawless wanderers. But their strength grew with the dangers which they had to encounter; and in 804, when attacked by Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, they employed large ships of war in their defence, and repulsed the invaders. In the following century they had square-rigged vessels with three masts, and of so large a burden as from 1200 to 2000 tons; and they carried on an extensive and lucrative trade with the sovereign princes and states of Italy, Germany, Greece, and Egypt. Power followed in the train of commerce; and from a merchant, Venice became, like our own East India Company, a conqueror. Her policy was ambitious, but her ambition was regulated by prudence; by degrees, her factories were converted into fortresses, and she rendered herself, by conquest or treaty, the mistress of many towns and ports of Dalmatia, Albania, and the Morea. The riches of her citizens increased with the increasing demand of Europe: "their manufactures of silk and glass, perhaps the institution of their bank are of high antiquity; and they enjoyed the fruits of their industry in the magnificence of public and private life." In the latter part of the twelfth century, Venice united with the Pope, Alexander the Third, and the Greek Emperor, in defending the republics of Lombardy against the German Emperor Frederic Barbarossa; and the services which on this occasion she rendered to the Pontiff, led him, in testimony of his gratitude, to confer upon the Republic the sovereignty of the Adriatic. This gave rise to the singular and splendid ceremony of the Doge's marrying the Sea, on the annual feast of the Ascension, and throwing into it his ring as a symbol of their espousals.

The share which Venice took in the capture of Constantinople at the beginning of the thirteenth century, added largely to her wealth and political importance; and the extension of her conquests over a considerable part of the adjoining continent of Italy raised her for a time to a still higher eminence. In spite of the fierce struggle which she had to maintain with the rival Republic of Genoa, a struggle which threatened at one time to annihilate the trade and even the political existence of Venice, she continued to advance till she reached the summit of her prosperity and greatness in the fifteenth century. The magnificence and splendour which she then displayed were unequalled; her city had arisen "like an exhalation from the deep," a gorgeous fairy scene,—

A vast metropolis, with glistering spires,
With theatres, basilicas adorned.

"The revenues of the Republic," to use the language of Robertson, "as well as the wealth amassed by individuals, exceeded whatever was elsewhere known. In the magni-

ficence of their houses, the richness of furniture, in profusion of plate, and in everything which contributed either towards elegance or parade in their mode of living,—the nobles of Venice surpassed the state of the greatest monarch beyond the Alps. Nor was all this the display of an inconsiderate dissipation; it was the natural consequence of successful industry, which, having accumulated wealth with ease, is entitled to enjoy it in splendour." The same writer tells us, that about the year 1420 the naval force of the republic consisted of 3000 trading-vessels of various dimensions, on board of which were employed 17,000 sailors: of 300 ships of greater force, manned with 8000 sailors: and of 45 large galleasses, or carracks, navigated by 11,000 sailors: while in the arsenals were employed 16,000 artificers.

ITS DECLINE AND CAPTURE BY THE FRENCH IN 1797.

In the year 1508, the Pope, the Emperor, the King of France, and the King of Spain, entered into a confederacy known by the name of the league of Cambray, for the purpose of humbling or destroying the power of Venice. The Republic escaped, with some losses, and had soon afterwards to encounter the rising greatness of the Turks. But the hour of her decline had approached, "Columbus and Vasco de Gama," to quote the words of Mr. Roscoe, "humbled a power which neither popes, princes, nor sultans, could unsettle or overthrow,—their discoveries tore away its pomp and glory, as the diffusion of knowledge in a subsequent age humbled those of Rome." When the rulers of Venice first heard that a passage had been found to India by the Cape of Good Hope, their sagacity at once foresaw the consequences, and already in anticipation they felt their strength departing; they saw themselves shut out from the rich traffic with the Region of the Sun, and "the golden stream turned to enrich another." Before the sixteenth century had closed, the Republic had sunk from her high position among the powers of Europe, into the rank of a secondary state; and while her resources were rapidly diminishing, she had to withstand the powerful enmity of the Turks. In this she succeeded for a long while,—long enough, indeed, to ward off from Christendom the dangers which menaced it at the hands of the infidels, and to entitle the Republic to the proud appellation of "Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;" but the treaty of Passarowitz in 1718 left her with scarcely more than a fragment of her vast dominions in Eastern Europe. Yet even while thus declining, Venice maintained in some degree her ancient state and splendour; and as her rulers had the wisdom to conceal her weakness under the guise of moderation, she continued to be treated with respect

..... till a tempest shook
All things most held in honour among men,—
All things the giant with the scythe had spared,
To their foundations, and at once she fell.

It would have been strange indeed, if a state, worn out and enfeebled as Venice was, had passed safely through the storm which followed the French Revolution. After maintaining for some time an unwilling neutrality, and allowing her territories upon the continent of Italy to be repeatedly overrun by Austrians and French in the course of their warfare, she exhibited symptoms which excited the displeasure of Buonaparte. On the 15th of May, 1797, a French force of 5000 or 6000 men crossed the Lagoon in boats, and took possession of the city without a shadow of resistance on the part of the Venetians; and on the same day the rulers of Venice, self-deposed, pronounced the dissolution of its ancient government, and the instalment of a democratic municipality, which, they seriously declared, was to give the last degree of perfection to the Republican system of government, so long the glory and happiness of the commonwealth. The French general himself, Baraguay D' Hilliers, was astonished at the facility of the conquest. "The sea-girt metropolis," says Mr. Simond, "might easily have been defended; and the artificers of the arsenal alone, a brave and devoted body of men, would have been abundantly sufficient to man a fleet of small vessels, superior to any which the invaders could assemble; while the rest of the population, although, perhaps, lukewarm only, would have been stimulated to resistance if the example had been thus given them. It was the pusillanimity of the nobles which gave confidence to the party opposed to them. They betrayed themselves into the hands of an enemy, whom they had first provoked by an imprudent dis-

play of hatred, and afterwards, when seriously threatened, had encouraged by their submissiveness." Thus fell the celebrated city and Republic of Venice;—

She who had stood yet longer than the last
Of the Four Kingdoms,—who, as in an ark,
Had floated down amid a thousand wrecks,
Uninjured, from the Old World to the New,
From the last glimpse of civilized life—to where
Light shone again, and with the blaze of noon.

The last doge of Venice was Manini; he completed a long list of one hundred and twenty, and had been chosen in the year which gave birth to the French Revolution. The unfortunate city itself, after being despoiled of its pictures and other treasures by its captors, was made over to Austria a few months afterwards by the treaty of Campo Formio. In 1805 it was annexed to the French kingdom of Italy; but in 1814 it passed again under the dominion of Austria.

GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY.

WE have already stated that Venice is built upon a collection of small islands or sand-banks, in the great estuary called the Lagoon; we will now say a few words concerning the arrangement of its parts. The shoals upon which it stands are gathered into two great clusters, divided from each other by a serpentine channel, called the *Canalazo*, or Grand Canal, but communicating across it by the celebrated bridge of the Rialto. The city may thus be described as separated into two principal portions, each made up of many small islands, and each entirely cut off from the other, except at this bridge. All these little islands themselves, so constituting each of these separate portions, are again connected together by smaller bridges which cross the little channels dividing them from one another. Now, as the islands are numerous, these bridges occur frequently, and as their arches are necessarily high, because they spring from low banks, they present a very steep ascent, which is cut into easy steps for the convenience of passage,—so that when taking a walk in Venice, as Mr. Rose says, you are perpetually going up and down stairs. Our readers will thus understand, that each of the two great divisions of the city has all its little fragments well connected by numerous bridges, but that the two divisions themselves have only one point of communication, namely, where they are joined by the Rialto.

These canals are the water-streets of Venice, the thoroughfares by which her citizens usually pass from one district to another. The *Canalazo*, or Grand Canal, is the main channel of communication,—the High Street, as it were, of the city, sweeping from one end of it to the other, and cutting it into two distinct quarters; the other canals, or *rii* as they are called, are so many lanes, or smaller streets, branching from the great trunk, and winding into every remote corner of each quarter. Our readers must not, however, suppose that the canals of Venice are her only thoroughfares; like other cities she has streets, though streets such as no other city can show, but still real land streets, "narrow, paved, commodious, and noiseless passages," (an unfavourable likeness of Cranbourn-alley and its cognate lanes, as Mr. Rose styles them,) by which you may pass without the aid of a boat from any one point to another, thanks to her multitude of bridges. It is a fault indeed in most descriptions of Venice, that while so much is said of her canals so little is said of her streets; for, "though the hoof of a horse, or the rumbling of a wheel, is never heard in these strait avenues," to use the language of another writer "they are of great resort for all the purposes of ordinary intercourse." Besides these streets, or *cale* as they are termed, there are several open places or squares of small size, which bear the appellation of *campi*, or fields, though it would be difficult to find a blade of grass in any one of them. Along the banks of the canals there is frequently a sort of wharf or footway, styled a *riva*; this is usually secured by a parapet, which is bored for a wicket; but the canals more frequently extend close up to the houses, which rise immediately from the water on either side.

"In forming the *riva*, or water foundations," says Mr. Rose, "the water is first excluded, as with us in works of a similar description. The first stratum of soil below the bottom of the canals is then thrown out, because this, as being soft alluvial matter, affords no solid foundation, and piles are driven into that beneath it, which appears to have been the original bed of the Lagoon, and on which a mass of mud, or *malp*, has been accumulated."

THE ENTRANCE INTO VENICE.

"Nor a breath of wind ruffled the surface of the shallow sea; and gliding on swiftly, we reached the celebrated city of Venice, but, unfortunately, not the best side of it, in less than one hour from Fusina. A confused heap of very old buildings presented itself, shabbily fine, with pointed windows, half Gothic, half Grecian, out of which dirty beds were thrust for the benefit of air. Half-rotten piles supported blocks of marble, richly carved, serving as landing-places to these miserable hovels, the walls of which, out of the perpendicular, seemed nodding to each other across the narrow canals. Through one of these we pushed on rapidly, turning several sharp corners in succession from canal to canal, with scarcely any dry communication from house to house. A few gondolas passed us. No noisy trade was heard, no cries, no rattling of carriages of course; not so much as the sound of a footstep disturbed the universal stillness. We might have fancied ourselves in the catacombs of all the fishes of the Adriatic, rather than in a town inhabited by men, but for the few heads that we saw here and there popping out of dark holes to look at us. Emerging at last from the maze of narrow canals, we found ourselves in the great one, which traverses the city in an easy curve, the very line of beauty, and rendered peculiarly striking from the circumstance of most of the buildings on each side being marble palaces. No quays, no terraces, no landing-place before them; they plunge at once into the briny deep, which, however, is here very shallow. Splendid marble stairs, with marble balustrades, lead up at once from the water to the hall-door. There it was that crowds of *gondolieri*, carrying lighted torches at night, used formerly to draw up, as elsewhere carriages and horses."

Such is the graphic account which Mr. Simond gives us of his entrance into Venice. The direction in which travellers usually approach the city is from Padua, whence the journey to Fusina, a sort of custom-house station on the coast, or rather on the margin of the Lagoon, may be performed either by water upon the Brenta and its canal, or by land upon the high road which runs along-side. The banks of the Brenta have always been the favourite resort of the Venetians during the heat of Summer and Autumn; and we read much of the palaces and villas with which they were once adorned. The river, however, is but a dull muddy stream, while its banks are flat, and generally destitute of large trees; "the best parts," says Mr. Woods, "resemble perhaps the Thames at Fulham, but the stream is narrower and the houses larger, all of them white, and the trees smaller." Another traveller compares the banks to ditch-dykes, and says that the much-vaunted palaces and villas appeared to have sunk into the stream, "for no such objects could we discern." There is doubtless, however, pretty and fanciful architecture, accompanied by much that is gay and pleasing in the appearance of these Venetian villas, "but all," to use the words of Mr. Rose, "is ugly that is not the immediate creation of man." In proof of this he adduces their situation; the greater part of them have the turnpike-road immediately in front, and between them and the navigable river, while the view of the stream is shut out from the lower windows by a high dyke, which is intended as a security against inundation. But this is not always a sufficient protection, for the houses lie considerably beneath the level of the road, and the road itself is occasionally overflowed. Altogether, the journey from Padua is a period of painful suspense, and the traveller congratulates himself when he reaches Fusina, and embarks in a gondola upon

..... The common ferry
That trades to Venice.

ITS GENERAL APPEARANCE.

THE general appearance of Venice is very peculiar; its parts may be easily described in detail, but it is difficult to give such a description of the whole scene as shall convey to the mind of one who has never seen it an adequate idea of its strange and singular character. The following is part of one quoted by Mr. Conder in his *Italy*, and which, he says, has been pronounced by those who have visited the fairy city, to be the most correct and graphic that has appeared.

"Venice was always an unintelligible place, and it is still unintelligible. I knew before that it was situated on many islands; that its highways were canals; that gondolas were its hackney-coaches; that it had St. Mark's, and the



COLONNADE AND LIBRARY IN THE PROCURATORIE NUOVE, AT VENICE.

Rialto, and the Doge's palace; and I know no more now. It was always a dream, and will continue a dream for ever. A man must be born in, or live long enough to become endeared to it, before he will either understand or feel at home in Venice. It is a glorious place for cripples; for I know no use that a gentleman has for his limbs; they are crutches to the bedridden,—spectacles to the blind. You step out of your gondola into your hotel, and out of your hotel into a gondola; and this is all the exertion that is becoming. The Piazza di S. Marco, and the adjoining quay, are the only places where you can stretch a limb; and if you desire to do so, they carry you there and bring you home again. To walk requires predetermination; and you order your gondola, and go on purpose. To come to Venice is to come on board; and it only differs from ship-board, that there is no danger of sea-sickness.

The Canal Grande is nearly three hundred feet wide. Other canals are wide enough; but the widest street in the city is not more than ten or twelve feet from house to house, and the majority do not exceed six or eight. To wind and jostle through these irregularities is intolerable, and all but impossible; no one thinks of doing so; and who would that had a gondola at command? The gondola is all that is dreamy and delightful,—its black funereal look, in high imaginative contrast with its internal luxury. You float on without sensible motion; its cushions were stolen from Mammon's chambers,—“blown up, not stuffed.” You seat yourself upon one of them, and sink, sink, sink, as if it were all air; you throw your leg upon another, and if you have occasion for it, which is rare at Venice, must hunt after it—lost—sunk.

“Traveller's and Canaletti's views, which are truth itself, give you a correct idea of Venice, but no idea of the strangeness of a first visit. It is not merely that there are canals and gondolas, but it is all canal and gondola. I know nothing to liken it to but a large fleet wind-bound; you order your boat and row round; and all that are at leisure do the same. St. Mark's, of an evening, that attracts all in the same direction, is but a ball on board the Commodore. If you laugh at this as extravagant, you will be right; but it is only extravagant because there is nothing real to compare with it. The fleet wind-bound is truth itself, and you have only to change the *Redentore** into the Spitfire, and

the *Saluté* into the Thunderer bomb, and it is real in feeling. Everything is in agreement with this. If the common people want a peach or a pomegranate, they hail a boat; for the very barrow-women (if you will keep me to the reality, and drive me to the absurdity of such phrases) go floating about, and their cry is that half-song, with the long dwelling on the final syllable, with which sailors call ‘Boat a-hoy!’

Everything at Venice is dream-like; for what is more so than to walk on the Rialto, where Antony spat on the Jew's gaberdine?—to stand where Othello addressed the assembled senate?—to lose yourself in search of old Priuli's palace? And for realities, go to St. Mark's, on an evening; see its fine square in all its marble beauty; the domes and minarets of its old church; the barbaric gloom of the Doge's palace; its proud towering campanile; look upon the famous Corinthian horses, and think of their emigration;—on the winged lion of the Piræus; walk in the illumination of its long line of *Cafés*; observe the variety of costume—the thin veil of the pale Venetian beauty—the Turks with their beards and castans, and long pipes, and chess-playing; the Greeks, with their scull-caps and richly-laced jackets: look on this, and believe it real; and ever after put faith in the Thousand and One Nights.”

ST. MARK'S PLACE.

The Piazza di S. Marco, or, as we say, St. Mark's Place, is the great centre of attraction at Venice. It is an oblong space, about 800 feet in length, by 350 in breadth, paved with flag-stones. On the south side are the *Procuratorie Nuove*, or New *Procuratorie*, a range of building originally erected for the accommodation of certain Venetian officers, styled the Procurators of St. Mark, and subsequently converted by the French into a palace for the Viceroy of Italy; it now helps to furnish the state-apartments which the Austrians keep for the use of their emperor when he may visit the city. On the north side are the *Procuratorie Vecchie*, or Old *Procuratorie*, which derive their name from having been applied in former times to the same uses as their opposite and less ancient neighbours. The eastern end is occupied by the celebrated Church of St. Mark; and on the western formerly stood the Church of S. Geminiani; but as that edifice interrupted the range of arcades which extended along the north and south sides of the piazza, it was removed by the French, who constructed in its place the grand staircase of the palace, and continued the

* *La Salute* and *Il Redentore*, are the names of two famous Churches in Venice.

arcades along the western side of the square. Adjoining this *Grande Piazza*, is the *Piazzetta*, a smaller square, which branches off at right angles from the southern side of the larger one, in a line with the church of St. Mark, and leads directly to the harbour, thus forming the "state entrance" to Venice from the sea, as shown in our engraving, page 249.

The two sides of the *Piazzetta* are occupied by splendid ranges of building; on the right, advancing from the sea, is the ducal palace, for many hundred years the residence of the Doges of Venice, and on the left stand the beautiful edifices of the *Zecca*, or Mint, and the Library of St. Mark, "the regular architecture and fresh and modern appearance of which seem to mock the fallen majesty of their antique neighbour." At that end of the *Piazzetta* which opens upon the sea, are proudly reared two magnificent granite columns, each of a single block; one is surmounted by the statue of St. Theodore, who appears to have been the first patron of the republic, and the other by the celebrated bronze figure, so universally known as the "winged lion of St. Mark." These proud trophies of the republic were brought from Greece in 1174; and the winged lion was always cherished by the citizens as an object of peculiar pride. It was the symbol of their far-extended power; and any insult offered to it would have been resented by every Venetian as an indignity cast upon himself and upon the state. Once, indeed, an ambassador from the Emperor ventured to ask, in what quarter of the globe such animals were found? "In the same country which produces spread eagles," was the reply; the spread eagle being, as our readers may know, the symbol of the Austrian, or Imperial power.

At the angle formed by the Piazza and *Piazzetta* stands a small but beautiful building, in which the records of the city were preserved; and immediately above it towers the lofty *Campanile*, or Belfry of St. Mark. On the opposite or northern side of the great square, and in a portion corresponding with that of the *Campanile* stands the *Orologio*, or clock-tower; both of these edifices may almost be regarded as appendages to the Cathedral of St. Mark, in front of which they stand. The *Orologio* has little beauty to recommend it; it forms the termination of the northern side of the square, above which it rises, though not above the church. "Over this porch," says Evelyn, "stands that admirable clock celebrated next to Strasburg for its many movements: among which, about twelve and six, which are their hours of Ave Maria, when all the town are on their knees, come forth the three kings led by a star, and passing by the image of Christ in his mother's arms, do their reverence, and enter into the clock by another door." While Evelyn was at Venice, a man came by his death through the agency of this clock in a most uncommon manner; he was employed to do something to it, and while so engaged, he stooped his head in such a place, and at such a point of time, that the quarter-boy struck it with his hammer, and knocked him over the battlements.

The effect which is produced by a first view of St. Mark's Place is remarkable. "After threading a narrow lane of alleys," says Mr. Mathews, "not half the width of that of Cranbourne, I came unexpectedly upon this grand square, the first sight of which is very striking. It would be difficult to compare it with anything. It is *unique*, rich, venerable, magnificent. The congregation of all nations in their various costumes, who lounge under the purple awnings of the cafés, smoking, playing at chess, and quaffing coffee, add much to its embellishment, and are in character with the buildings, where all orders of architecture seem jumbled together." "The morning after my arrival," says Mr. Woods, "I repaired to the Place of St. Mark, which I entered by a sudden turn under some arcades, and on the first burst it appeared to me the most magnificent thing I had ever seen. Had I been suddenly transported there from some distant place, I should have known at once where I was, from the views I had seen of it. The strange-looking church and the great ugly *Campanile* could not be mistaken; but although I had an idea of the architecture, I had none of the effect." The same writer defines this celebrated place as a well-proportioned avenue to a great building, which is of sufficient consequence, both by its size and the richness of its decoration, to merit such an avenue; to this he thinks that it very much owes its impressive character.

Around three sides of this place run deep arcades, surmounted by massive structures; the faces of the houses above the arches are all of stone, and enriched with a good deal of ornament. Nothing looks poor or neglected; the

architecture throughout is rich, though not correct,—bearing, perhaps, as Mr. Woods expresses it, "the stamp of riches and power more than that of good taste." Each side is uniform in itself, though different from the others, and each presents one unbroken line of elevation, a circumstance to which much of the effect of the place may be attributed; for had the three fronts been composed of a centre and wings, they would have distracted the attention by forming each a separate composition; as it is they unite with the objects at the end to form one whole. The arcades spoken of are appropriated to cafés, goldsmiths' shops, &c.

The scene which St. Mark's Place offers at the present time is one of the most remarkable in the world; but in former days, when Venice was in her "high and palmy state," it was quite unrivalled. "There," says Coryat, who saw it more than two hundred years ago, "you may see many Polonians, Slavonians, Persians, Grecians, Turks, Jews, Christians, of all the famous regions of Christendom, and each nation distinguished from another by their proper and peculiar habits, a singular show, and by many degrees the worthiest of all the European countries." Evelyn, too, was struck with the singularity of the spectacle. "Now was I less surprised," he says, "with the strange variety of the several nations which were seen every day in the streets and piazzas, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Persians, Moors, Greeks, Slavonians; some with their targets and bucklers, and all in their native fashions negotiating in this famous emporium which is always crowded with strangers." But the Piazza was not only renowned as being the great mart of Christendom; it was the spot on which the population used always to assemble for the purposes of festivity and enjoyment. Here were celebrated the great fair, the carnival and all the triumphs of the state; and here were represented those characteristic national ceremonies with which the Venetian government was accustomed to stimulate the energies of its citizens. "But it is not with recollections of splendour and festivity alone that the Piazza di S. Marco is associated," to use the words of Mr. Roscoe; "spectacles of terror and scenes of bloodshed have been exhibited within its boundaries." The public executions used generally to take place in the *Piazzetta* between the two granite columns; but whenever it was judged necessary to make an especial display of severity, the Piazza was chosen for the purpose, and the scaffold of death was erected, perhaps, on the very spot where the stage of the juggler had stood but the day before. Mr. Rogers has well described the varying character of the scene.

The sea, that emblem of uncertainty,
Changed not so fast for many and many an age
As this small spot. To-day 'twas full of masts
And lo! the madness of the carnival,
The monk, the nun, the holy legate, masked.
To-morrow came, the scaffold and the wheel;
And he died there by torch-light, bound and gagged,
Whose name and crime they knew not.

THE DUCAL PALACE.

THE Ducal Palace occupies three sides of a quadrangle of which the church of St. Mark forms the fourth. It exhibits three fronts; one already mentioned looks upon the *Piazzetta*, a second lines the quay next to the port, and is thus in the same line with the two granite columns, while the third is washed by a narrow canal which divides the palace from the public prisons, and is crossed at a lofty height by the famous Bridge of Sighs. Our readers may see the first two of these fronts in our engraving of a view taken from the port; the last one, together with the façade of the prison and the connecting link between the two, is shown in page 256.

The Ducal Palace was originally built in the ninth century; but having been on several occasions partially destroyed by fire, it has been in portions frequently restored. The present edifice can in no part claim a higher date than the fourteenth century, when it was rebuilt by the Doge Marino Faliero, so well known for the conspiracy in which he embarked, and the untimely end to which he came. The style of architecture is of a barbarous kind, Saracenic rather than Gothic; still it is attractive to the European eye from its quaintness and singularity. "It is built," says Mr. Forsyth, "in a style which may be Arabesque if you will, but it reverses the principles of all other architecture; for here the solid rests on the open, a wall of enormous mass rests on a slender fretwork of shafts, arches, and intersected circles. The very corners are cut to admit a

thin spiral column, a barbarism which I saw imitated in several old palaces." Mr. Simond compares the palace to "a huge chest of drawers of old-fashioned inlaid work with small feet under it." Nevertheless, with all the defects of its style, the effect which this enormous structure produces is very imposing and magnificent.

The palace is entered by eight gates, the principal one being at the corner of the Piazzetta, between the palace itself and the church of St. Mark. This leads into the *cortile*, a vast and gloomy court, around which the sides of the palace extend; from this court a noble flight of steps, called, from the colossal statues of Mars and Neptune which adorn its summit, "the Giants' Staircase," leads to an open arcade, where, under the Republican government, the two lions' mouths were fixed, "which gaped day and night to receive the anonymous informations that ensured the safe gratification of private revenge." From this are entered the apartments which were formerly appropriated to the Doge, and to the various chambers of council and of state, in which the Venetian nobles were accustomed to assemble; most of them are crowded with paintings, the noblest specimens of the Venetian school. The Hall of the Grand Council, which Evelyn describes as one of the most noble and spacious rooms in Europe, is now converted into a public library; it is rich in works of art, the ceiling having been painted in fresco by Bassano and others, the subjects being chiefly allegorical representations of the acts of the Republic. Beneath are ranged the portraits of the Doges "drawn in their ducal robes;" but one is wanting, and in his place is a black vacancy with this brief inscription, *Locus Marini Faleri decapitati pro criminibus*, "the place of Marino Faliéro beheaded for his crimes." There are other splendid apartments here, worthy of the opulence and power of the republic;

..... Rooms of state
Where kings have feasted, and the festal song
Rung through the fretted roof—cedar and gold.

But there are none which excite stronger interest than the Hall of the Council of Ten, the ceiling of which is ornamented with superb paintings, the productions of the pencil of Paul Veronese, and the hall which was appropriated for the tribunal of the Inquisition. Our limits, however, prevent us from now entering into a fuller description, as well as from doing more than just mentioning the celebrated dungeons, which, in connexion with that tribunal, were formed upon the side of the palace which looks on the narrow canal, dividing it from the public prison.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. MARK.

THE exterior of this celebrated edifice has been well pronounced "an architectural puzzle,"—at least to the unpractised eye. It belongs to no single order of architecture; "it is of a mixed breed," says Mr. Mathews, "between a Mohammedan mosque and a Christian church." In fact, as he observes, when it was built, the imaginations of the Venetians were full of Constantinople and the glorious exploits of Dandolo; for though it was founded as early as the year 977, it was not completed till sometime afterwards. The embellishment continued for a long while; the bronze horses, and other precious ornaments were brought from Constantinople in 1204; and even so late as 1455, it is supposed that the upper finishings were being executed. The original architects were Greek, and most of the materials came from the empire; nevertheless, as Mr. Forsyth says, "their combination is neither Greek nor Gothic, nor Basilical nor Saracenic, but a fortuitous jumble of all. A front divided by a gallery, and a roof hooded with mosquish cupolas, give it a strange unchristian look. Nowhere have I seen so many columns crowded into so small a space. Near three hundred are stuck on the pillars of the front, and three hundred more on the balustrade above."

The interior of this edifice is rich in the extreme. "Being come into the church," says Evelyn "you see nothing, and tread on nothing, but what is precious. The floor is all inlaid with agates, lazulis, calcedons, jaspers, porphyries, and other rich marbles,—admirable also for the work; the walls sumptuously incrustured, and presenting to the imagination the shapes of men, birds, houses, flowers, and a thousand varieties. The roof is of most excellent mosaic. But what most persons admire is the new work of the emblematic tree at the other passage out of the church. In the midst of this rich volto rise five cupolas, the middle very large, and sustained by thirty-six marble columns, eight of which are of precious marble. Under these cupolas is the high altar, on which is a reliquary of

several sorts of jewels, engraven with figures, after the Greek manner, and set together with plates of pure gold. The altar is covered with a canopy of ophir, on which is sculptured the story of the Bible, and so on the pillars, which are of Parian marble, that support it. Behind these are four other columns of transparent and true oriental alabaster, brought hither out of the ruins of Solomon's temple, as they report."

Most travellers have spoken in disparaging terms of the effect which is produced by this profusion of ornament. Mr. Forsyth describes the interior of the church as "dark, heavy, barbarous, nay poor, in spite of all the porphyry, and Oriental marbles, and glaring mosaics, that would enrich the walls, the vaults, and pavements. In fact," he adds, "such a variety of colours would impair the effect of the purest architecture." Mr. Simond speaks of it as resembling "a huge cavern rudely hewn in a rock and gilt all over with great tawdry figures in mosaic, sprawling above and below," the general effect being "half ludicrous, half awful, at once majestic and mean." Gloominess is a fault which is charged against it by many; indeed, Evelyn had remarked that "this church was much too dark and dismal, and of heavy work." Some critics, however, have striven to vindicate it from these imputations of faults; they say that like the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, it was evidently intended to be adapted for nocturnal illumination, and that it cannot therefore be judged of by daylight. Mr. Rose says that "there is no wonder in Venice superior to the church of St. Mark. Canaletti may show you what it is without, but a Rembrandt only could give you an idea of its interior. If I could have visions anywhere it would be here."

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

BESIDES the edifices which we have described, there are many public buildings in Venice well worthy of notice; although our limits will not permit us to speak of them at any length. The Exchange is interesting from the associations connected with it; here the Venetian merchants were accustomed to meet twice a day,—between eleven and twelve in the forenoon, and between five and six in the evening. The *Dogana da Mare*, or Custom-House, in which the duties are paid by foreign ships, and on merchandise from abroad, is a noble edifice; its front is adorned with a magnificent colonnade of marble pillars, and over them rises a small but beautiful tower, the summit of which supports a statue bearing a large golden globe, to represent the world. The structure has, however, lost much both of its importance and of its elegance; and although it is still a beautiful and striking object when observed from the sea, it owes its present interest principally to the connexion of its design with the earlier glory of the city. The Arsenal, which at one time was the largest and finest in Europe, is deserving of attention; including the Dock-Yard, its outer wall measures between two and three miles. The entrance is defended by two towers flanking a gateway, over which the winged lion still frowns defiance, and on each side are some enormous Athenian lions, trophies of the Venetian conquest of the Piræus. The Magazines and Docks are said to be kept in good order, though little work is going forward; besides forges, founderies, and magazines, there is here a magnificent gallery for making cables, 1000 feet long and 85 feet wide, supported by 92 pillars. In the Armoury the first object of notice is a Turkish banner, taken at Lepanto; and there is seen a heap of Damascus muskets, scimitars, and eastern arms, mixed with trombones and weapons now out of use, among which is a curious antique mortar, made by a Venetian senator of leather and cords. The famous Bucentaur, in which the Doge went once a year to espouse the Adriatic, used to be kept here; when the French made themselves masters of Venice, it had fallen so much to decay that it could hardly be kept afloat, and it was burnt for its gilding, which only forty years before had cost 60,000 golden sequins. This gaudy machine was constructed by order of the senate at the beginning of the fourteenth century; it had three decks, each 100 feet long by 22 in breadth, and was set in motion by 168 rowers, concealed on the lower deck, aided by a number of towing-barges. The second deck was most gorgeously fitted up with crimson velvet and gold, allegorical statues, gilt basso-relievos and trophies.

PRIVATE PALACES.

THE palaces of Venice are a very remarkable feature of the city; they confer upon it a peculiar air of splendour and



THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS, VENICE.

magnificence. Forsyth speaks of them as standing on grand Etruscan substructions, and Evelyn says that the foundations were "not less chargeable than the superstructure, being all built on piles at an immense cost." Above the water-floor they display every variety of architecture; most of them have two, and some three gates, in the middle of their fronts. Over the gates is a stately and decorated superstructure of balconies, arcades, and gigantic windows, contrived for Venetian pageantry, and set in studied opposition to the general style of the front. The windows are generally arched. Most of these palaces are now deserted, or occupied during only a small portion of the year. Within the last thirty or forty years, more than a hundred are said to have been sold and dismantled. Some have been converted into hotels:—Mr. Simond thus speaks of that in which he alighted. "Through a lower hall of immense size, and paved with marble, we reached the double flight of the grand staircase, the walls adorned with fresco paintings and the marble balustrade beautifully carved. The landing-place was another immense hall or gallery, divided by the staircase. These princely ante-chambers, each 69 feet by 32, with ceilings proportionally high, gilt and painted, and adorned with crystal lustres, gave entrance to the various apartments, by a number of doors entering into them." The extent of some of these palaces is hardly credible. "The palace of an acquaintance of mine," says Mr. Rose, "now sold for nearly nothing, in consequence of a distress for taxes, lodged two or three branches of his family, and contained upwards of seventy bed-rooms." In the kitchens of the same mansion there

were one hundred stoves. The immense size of these buildings is explained, according to some, by the supposition that those of the more ancient nobles served for magazines as well as dwelling-houses, and that the fashion thus begun was continued, though the motive for it no longer existed.

According to Mr. Rose, one of the first conveniences which one expects in a good house at Venice, is that of having *la riva in casa*, as it is styled; that is, to be able to have your boat laid alongside your own threshold, so that you step from the hall into the gondola. The next degree of comfort is to have what is called *la riva in faza*, that is, to have the landing-place opposite, you having to traverse a quay to get to your boat, of about the breadth of the footway which you pass in order to arrive at your carriage in London. There is scarcely a good house in Venice without one or other of these conveniences; the palaces all enjoy the first and highest degree of comfort. It is remarked, as a curious circumstance, that in spite of this general rule, which must have regulated the construction of Venetian mansions, the new palace, which was begun by the French, and finished by the Austrians for their emperor, in the Place of St. Mark, is so far removed from the water, that the imperial possessor could not reach his gondola in rainy weather without a wetting: it is precisely the same we are told, as if we had built a magnificent house for our king in the interior of Spring-gardens-terrace, without an access to his carriage. "The anecdote," says Mr. Rose, "is trifling in itself, but will serve to show the entire ignorance, both of French and Austrians, of whatever concerns this world of waters."

THE END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

